

Italy

Follow-up to UNGA res 77/107 ("Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts")

Submission from Italy on new developments and activities undertaken during the reporting period 2024-2026

Please set out briefly any new developments or activities undertaken in the following areas:

- I.** Ratifications or Accessions to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, their Additional Protocols and other relevant international humanitarian law (IHL) treaties

Not applicable

- II.** Adoption of national legislation to implement the above-mentioned instruments

Not Applicable

- III.** Adoption of other measures of implementation and for the dissemination of IHL

Promotion and Dissemination of International Humanitarian Law

- *Drafting process of a new Manual on International Law Applicable to Military Operations*

The Ministry of Defence established a Working Group for drafting a Manual on International Law Applicable to Military Operations by Decree in October 2023. Its aim is to draft a military manual focused on international humanitarian law issues and public international law aspects of military operations abroad, paying particular attention to practice, emphasising good practice in the application of IHL.

The Working Group is composed of legal advisers and experts from the Armed Forces, academia, the Military Justice, staff and IHL trainers of the Italian Red Cross. A Scientific Committee, comprising experts with different backgrounds, has also been established to support the activities of the Working Group.

The Working Group has ended its activities in 2026, and the text of the Military Manual is under approval by competent authorities.

- *Adoption of the Directive on the protection of cultural property in case of armed conflict*

In 2025, the General Office of Legal Affairs of the Italian Defence General Staff, Ministry of Defence, adopted a Directive on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (SMD-UGAG-002/25).

The Directive provides a comprehensive overview of the rules of international humanitarian law applicable to the protection of cultural property in armed conflict, while also highlighting practical measures for their implementation. It further addresses the role that the "Blue Shield for Culture" Task Force - a specialised unit composed of personnel from Carabinieri units operating on the basis of a cooperation agreement with UNESCO - may play in such contexts.

- *Italy-Italian Red Cross Open Pledge on Disability*

At the occasion of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Italy and the Italian Red Cross jointly submitted an open pledge on 'Enhance the protection and inclusion of persons with disabilities during situations of risks, including situations of armed conflicts and disasters'. As part of the

implementation of this pledge, which was open to wider participation and was subsequently endorsed by multiple States, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC, Italy and the Italian Red Cross are carrying out a series of activities to foster stakeholder dialogues and actions in this area. More specifically, the General Office of Legal Affairs of the Italian Defence General Staff, Ministry of Defence and the Italian Red Cross have developed in 2026 the draft technical guidelines entitled “International Law and the Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Armed Conflict Contexts”. In June 2026, a multi-stakeholder working table, involving the Ministry of Defence (including representatives of the Defence Veterans Centre and Defence personnel with disabilities), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Disability, the Italian Department of Civil Protection and the Italian Red Cross, will be convened by the General Office of Legal Affairs of the Italian Defence General Staff to discuss a policy-technical document on the protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict scenarios according to relevant international law norms, elaborated by the same Office in cooperation with the Italian Red Cross.

In 2024, on the occasion of the first G7 Ministerial Meeting on Inclusion and Disability, the competent G7 Ministers adopted the “Solfagnano Charter”, which sets out eight priorities aimed at supporting “the right of all persons to full and effective participation and inclusion in civil, social, economic, cultural, and political life in our countries”. Within this framework, Priority 8 is devoted to the “Prevention and management of emergency preparedness and post-emergency situations, including climate crises, armed conflicts, and humanitarian crises”.

- *Adoption of the renewed national Directives on Rules of Engagement (ROE)*

In 2026, the Italian Defence General Staff approved the renewed document, aimed at further aligning operational practice with contemporary international legal standards governing the conduct of military operations. The updated Directive reinforces the integration of international humanitarian law principles - including distinction, proportionality, necessity, and precaution - into operational planning and decision-making processes.

In this respect, the adoption of the renewed Directive also represents a significant measure in the implementation of Italy’s obligations under the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, particularly concerning the dissemination and practical application of IHL within the Armed Forces and the conduct of military operations in compliance with applicable international law.

Armed Forces

- *Training of Italian Armed Forces on IHL*

The organisation of training programs by the various components of the Armed Forces (the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Carabinieri) is a key priority for Italy and it is arranged by military academies and military commands present on the national territory, targeting officers, non-commissioned officers and other members of the Italian Armed Forces. Specific, tailored courses are also organised for legal advisers by the CASD (Centre for Defence Higher Studies).

Based on a framework agreement with the Italian Ministry of Defence, in 2024-2026 the Italian Red Cross managed around 100 training courses and dissemination activities on international humanitarian law for the benefit of the Italian Armed Forces, including for personnel deployed in military missions abroad. These courses are taught through the involvement of IHL trainers and staff of the Italian Red Cross, academics connected to the National Society, legal and military experts.

The Italian Defence General Staff, through its ‘Gender Policies’ section, further provides training courses for Gender Advisors and Gender Focal Points aimed at officers, non-commissioned officers, and civilian personnel of the Defence administration. IHL modules are an integral part of the aforementioned training courses.

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also supports the training of activities for military personnel organized by the Sanremo International Institute of Humanitarian Law.

Dissemination among the youth

- *National IHL Competition for secondary school students* - Based on an Agreement between the Italian Ministry of Education and the Italian Red Cross, and with the endorsement of the Italian MFA, a National IHL Competition involving hundreds of students in the third and fourth classes of secondary schools from all Italian regions is annually organised at the Italian Red Cross Headquarters in Rome. The main aim of the initiative is to accomplish the objective of raising awareness on IHL among civilians, and to make adolescents increasingly aware of the reality of armed conflict and humanitarian actions.

The competition is divided into two phases: the first one implies a cycle of lessons to provide basic skills on IHL and on the competition, held by Italian Red Cross IHL instructors in cooperation with the participating schools. The second phase is a 2-day in-person challenge involving around 20 teams of 8 students, each of which represents its region of provenance. The competition is composed of different gaming ‘thematic stations’ where students will have to act in first person in fictional scenarios, including a visit to a prison camp, an interview with a prisoner of war, or a trial in a criminal court. The latest edition of the initiative took place in Rome on 16 and 17 May 2026.

IV. Domestic case-law relating to the above-mentioned instruments

Not applicable.

V. Activities carried out by national commissions or committees to support the implementation or dissemination of IHL

The Commission for the Study and Development of International Humanitarian Law was established by a Decree of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in 2021. Its mandate and membership were subsequently renewed by a further Decree of the same Ministry adopted on 24 January 2024. During the period under review, the Commission continued its activities in this field and, through its regular meetings, provided an important forum for fostering cooperation and strengthening links among the main institutions active in the area of international humanitarian law.

The Commission also organised its first outreach conference, in cooperation with the Italian Society for International Organisation and the Italian Red Cross, devoted to “Vulnerabilities and Armed Conflicts”, held in Rome in October 2025, with the participation of domestic authorities, academics, and civil society organisations, like Save the Children Italy, the Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict’ (UNETCHAC), and the Sanremo Institute of International Humanitarian Law. The event included a specific focus on the protection of persons with disabilities from the effects of armed conflicts, in line with the international commitment described above.

The Commission has also participated in periodic international meetings of similar bodies, facilitating the exchange of good practices with other countries and strengthening international cooperation. This was the case, for example, with the Second Regional Conference of European National IHL Commissions, held in Warsaw on 20–21 May 2025, where the Secretary of the Italian Commission participated as a panellist in the plenary session. Similarly, the National IHL Committees of Italy, Austria, and Slovenia have engaged in joint activities within the framework of international humanitarian law conferences, including a panel involving the chairpersons of the respective National IHL Committees as part of the trilateral IHL conference organised by the Italian Red Cross in Gorizia in November 2025, as well as the participation of representatives of these institutions in a trilateral conference held in Ljubljana in April 2026.

VI. Other relevant initiatives to promote respect for the 1949 Geneva Conventions, their Additional Protocols and other relevant instruments.

- *Engagement in international fora and initiatives*

Italy continues to engage in several international fora and initiatives related to IHL. This includes its active participation in the Global IHL Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law, through contributions provided to different workstreams during all rounds of consultations.

Italy has actively participated in the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, also through the elaboration of the abovementioned pledge on disability, and additional pledges on ‘Ensuring the Safety, Well-being, and Valorization of Volunteers and Volunteering’ and on ‘Strengthening dissemination and implementation of International Humanitarian Law and International Disaster Law’.

This latter document consists of a set of bilateral institutional and operational commitments between Italy and the Italian Red Cross aimed at strengthening collaboration between the two parties, including on the promotion and respect of IHL through dissemination and awareness-raising activities. This pledge has facilitated further cooperation among domestic stakeholders, as exemplified by the elaboration of implementation agreements for further actions in these areas involving the General Office of Legal Affairs of the Italian Defence General Staff, the Italian Red Cross and the Military General Prosecutor's Office at the Supreme Court of Cassation. As part of these agreements, further joint activities are currently being arranged with specific regard to some ‘preparedness’ measures, such as the legal and institutional setup of a National Information Bureau as per relevant IHL duties, and the arrangement of IHL training for military judges and prosecutors in line with Resolution 1 “Building a universal culture of compliance with international humanitarian law” (para. 6) adopted at the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Similarly, Italy is involved in various fora set up under the auspices of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, including the Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems Group of Government Experts. Italy has also endorsed the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, officially launched during the UNGA80 High Level Week in September 2025 and joined the related pledge submitted by Australia during the 34th International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent. Italy continues to support other inter-governmental initiatives, such as the Safe School Declaration and to endorse international commitments such as the Vancouver Principles.

Italy continues its support to demining in countries affected by remnants of war through dedicated funds channelled through relevant actors such as the UN, as exemplified by the Euro 1.5 million agreement with the UNDP, Mine Action Programme, in Ukraine, and ICRC, with contributions to Afghanistan, Mali and Somalia for more than Euro 4 million.

Italy is particularly engaged in supporting the mandate of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflicts, providing financial support to its activities and promoting the CAAC agenda in every format, particularly as a priority for the 2026 -28 mandate at the Human Rights Council in Geneva and as coordinator of the CAAC Group of Friends at the EU in Brussels together with Belgium. The Italian MFA also keeps supporting the activities of the University Network for Children in Armed Conflicts (UNETCHAC).

- Fifth National Action Plan implementing UN Security Council resolution on ‘Women, Peace and Security’ (UNSC Res. 1325 of 2000)

The implementation in Italy of the UNSC Res. 1325 – and of the related international agenda – is coordinated by the Interministerial Human Rights Committee (CIDU) set up at the Italian MFA. The CIDU has, over the years, supervised the implementation of subsequent National Action Plans, also in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence. In particular, in 2025, Italy adopted its Fifth National Action Plan (2025-2029). The National Action Plan is therefore structured around a core set of fundamental objectives: promoting the equal and effective participation of women in decision-making processes and peace operations; consolidating the presence of women in the Armed Forces and Police; strengthening the protection of women, girls, and children in conflict and postconflict areas, and reinforcing their role; consolidating communication and training activities on

women's rights and the priorities of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, creating synergies with civil society and academia. A draft bill pending before the Italian Senate aims to foster the domestic legal framework for repressing crimes against women that occur in armed conflicts.